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AUTHOR Fisher, Philip A.  
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## ABSTRACT

A survey questionnaire was administered to men and women undergraduates who were classified as masculine, feminine, androgynous, or undifferentiated depending upon whether they were above or below the median on separate measures of masculinity and femininity. Classifications were based on both the Berzins and Welling (Welling, 1975) and Spence, Helmreich, and Stapp (1974) sex role scales. Examined were four hypotheses suggesting that androgynous persons of both sexes, more than the traditionally sex typed (masculine men and feminine women), would express greater feelings of political efficacy, be more politically active, less conservative, and less dogmatic. Mixed support was found for the first two hypotheses and the second two were not supported. Feminine persons of both sexes were the most conservative and most dogmatic. This study found that androgynous persons have greater feelings of efficacy and are more politically active, while feminine persons are the most traditional and most isolated from political affairs. The study also offers support for the use of sex role scales that distinguish four sex role types. (Author)

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## SEX ROLES AND POLITICAL ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOR

Philip A. Fisher

Wayne State University

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In order to better understand political behavior and attitudes, past studies have often examined sex differences. But there are two reasons why a better understanding may result from examining the variable of sex role. First, if sex differences exist, few persons would suggest that such differences would be due to biological factors. But a more reasonable explanation would be that men and women are socialized into different roles, and it is these roles that may be related to political behavior and attitudes. Therefore, a better method to examine socialization would be to look at role identification rather than physical gender.

A second reason that sex roles may be related to political behavior is that several recently developed sex role scales include separate measures of masculinity and femininity rather than have both combined into a single bipolar continuum. These scales allow men and women to be classified as either masculine, feminine, androgynous or indeterminate. Studies by Spence, Helmreich, and Stapp (1975), and Wetter (1975) have shown that differences across these four classifications exist for self-esteem. Sex role may, therefore, be related to political behavior because high self-esteem has been associated with interest and involvement in politics (Lane, 1959). These new scales may also be related to a model of sex role

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development proposed by Rebecca, Hefner, and Oleshansky (1976). Rebecca et al. state that people either polarize or transcend sex roles.

Transcendence might, therefore, be associated with the classification of a person as androgynous. Development into the transcendence stage has not been strongly supported by our society, and so the minority of persons who have reached this stage might be expected to be not as traditional, conservative, or dogmatic.

Four hypotheses were examined. Because androgynous persons have been shown to have the highest level of self-esteem and indeterminates the least, and because self-esteem is related to political efficacy and political involvement, then the first hypothesis is that for both men and women, androgynous persons will be the most politically efficacious followed by masculine, feminine, and then indeterminate persons. The second hypothesis is that for both men and women the same order will hold for political activism. A third hypothesis is that androgynous men and women are less conservative than masculine men and feminine women who behave in agreement with the society's current standards of polarized sex differences. A fourth hypothesis is that androgynous men and women are not as dogmatic as the traditionally sex typed, since more rigid persons might not tolerate the ambiguity of their having both masculine and feminine qualities.

Subjects. Questionnaire respondents were 85 male and 128 female undergraduates in day and evening psychology classes at an urban university. Males ranged in age from 18 to 45, with a mean of 26.2, and females ranged in age from 18 to 50, with a mean of 24.5.

Procedure. A questionnaire distributed near the end of the Spring Quarter, 1976, included the sex role scales of Berzins and Welling (Welling, 1975) and Spence et al. (1974), a ten-item political efficacy

measure, a twelve-item self-report measure of frequency of political behavior, a twenty-item conservatism scale adapted from Wilson and Patterson (1968), a twenty-item dogmatism scale (Trodel and Powell, 1965), and demographic questions. Factor analysis was computed (principle axis solution, varimax rotation) for each dependent measure with males and females combined, and two factors of efficacy, two factors of activism, three factors of conservatism, and two factors of dogmatism were computed. Dependent measures were then composed of all items from each scale, and also the items from each factor, for a total of thirteen dependent measures. Hypotheses were analyzed using a three-way analysis of variance for each sex role scale and each dependent measure with the three independent variables being sex, class (self-reports dichotomized into working and middle class), and sex role classification.

Results. Some support was shown for the first hypotheses (see Table 1). A main effect of sex role was significant for two of the efficacy measures and the Spence scale. Androgynous or masculine persons were highest in political efficacy and indeterminates low in efficacy. For the Berzins scale, however, no main effect was significant, but a sex by sex role interaction was significant for these same two measures. Feminine males and masculine females were highest and the traditionally sex typed (masculine males and feminine females) were lowest in feelings of efficacy.

The second hypothesis was partially supported. A significant main effect of sex role was found for all three measures and the Spence scale and two measures and the Berzins scale. The order of most to least politically active was, for the Berzins scale, androgynous, masculine, indeterminate, and feminine, and for the Spence scale, masculine,

androgynous, indeterminate, and feminine.

The third hypothesis was not supported. A significant main effect of sex role was found for three of the four conservatism measures and the Berzins scale, but for only one of the measures of the Spence scale. For three of the four measures, feminine persons were the most conservative and indeterminates the least conservative. In all four measures, androgynous persons were more conservative than masculine persons.

The fourth hypothesis was not supported. A significant main effect of sex role was found only for two measures of dogmatism and the Berzins scale. Feminine persons were the most dogmatic and indeterminates lowest in dogmatism.

Post hoc tests (Newman-Kuels, .05 level of significance) were computed where main effects of sex role were significant for the dependent measures in all four hypotheses. In general, only the extremes were significantly different.

Significant differences for men and women were found for two of the three measures of political activism, and one of the four measures of conservatism. Men were <sup>more</sup> ~~not~~ politically active, and women more conservative. A significant main effect and interaction with social class was found for several measures, but social class generally did not affect the examination of the four hypotheses.

Conclusions. This study found support that sex role is related to political behavior. Androgynous persons are the highest or next highest in political efficacy and political activism, and indeterminates are the least efficacious and feminine persons the least active. However, androgynous persons are not as well differentiated in their attitudes of conservatism and dogmatism. For these attitudes, it tends to be the

feminine person who is most conservative and most dogmatic, and the indeterminate person who is the least conservative and least dogmatic.

And so in summary, this study found that, first, feminine persons are the most traditional and also the most isolated from political affairs. They are low in political efficacy, the least politically active, and the most conservative and most dogmatic. And second, this study may also include an indication of potentially wider citizen participation in political affairs in our society in the future. It is generally recognized that rigid sex role stereotypes in our society are breaking down. As our society comes to more greatly reward flexibility in sex roles, more people will become what today is labeled as androgynous. Since this study found androgynous persons to be among the most politically efficacious and active, this leads to a <sup>suggestion</sup> ~~question~~ that citizen participation will increase as more people come to be typed as androgynous. It may be, of course, that to be classified as androgynous today is to be distinctly different in some manner that may not be the case in the future. But it could also well be that a person rigidly masculine or feminine is restricted in what they will attempt to do, and as it is the androgynous person today that will extend themselves into greater political involvement, this pattern of behavior may continue in the future.

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Table 1  
 Significant Probabilities of Sex Role Main Effect  
 and Sex by Sex Role Interaction

| Dependent<br>Variable | Berzins and Welling Scale |                | Spence et al. Scale |                |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|----------------|---------------------|----------------|
|                       | Sex Role                  | Sex X Sex Role | Sex Role            | Sex X Sex Role |
| Efficacy One          |                           | ***            | **                  |                |
| Efficacy Two          |                           | **             | **                  |                |
| Efficacy Three        |                           | *              |                     |                |
| Activism One          | ***                       |                | ***                 |                |
| Activism Two          |                           |                | ***                 |                |
| Activism Three        | ***                       |                | ***                 |                |
| Conservatism One      | ***                       |                |                     |                |
| Conservatism Two      |                           |                |                     |                |
| Conservatism Three    | **                        |                | **                  |                |
| Conservatism Four     | **                        |                | *                   |                |
| Dogmatism One         | **                        |                |                     |                |
| Dogmatism Two         | **                        |                |                     |                |
| Dogmatism Three       | *                         |                |                     |                |

\* .05 < p < .10

\*\* .01 < p < .05

\*\*\* p < .01